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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT — Friday, April 15, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "CHEERY, CONVENIENT KITCHENS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

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Spring housecleaning has suggested my topic for today. It's about kitchens -- cheery, convenient kitchens. For during this annual seige of scouring and redecorating, nearly every kitchen in the country gets a thorough going-over.

It's not a difficult matter to make a kitchen cheery and pleasant. Some fresh paint and clean shelf papers -- some washing and polishing -- sometimes new curtains -- all these help a lot to freshen up the room. Or a plant of some kind on the shelf in front of the sink adds a note of interest. One woman I know always keeps an amusing cactus plant there.

However, a kitchen should be more than pleasant and cheery. Above all it should be convenient. For it's a workroom where food is prepared -- and cooked -- and served. Therefore efficiency of arrangment is just as valuable in a kitchen as it is in the office of a businessman or the laboratory of a chemist.

Convenience in a kitchen takes a lot of planning. For many things enter into what makes for efficiency in meal preparation. Partly it is the location -- the size -- and the general floor plan of the kitchen. And partly it is the equipment -- the dimensions of this equipment and the way you arrange it.

Naturally, the best time to plan a kitchen is in the blueprint before the house even begins to take shape. If that hasn't been done it is often possible to remodel kitchens so that they are more efficient. And very often -- just a well-planned rearrangement of the equipment can change an inconvenient kitchen into one that is many times more satisfactory.

If you are in the kitchen-improvement frame of mind now, here are some tips on arrangements of furnishings. Experts have studied the different kinds of work that we do in a kitchen. Then they have figured the order in which we ordinarily do these jobs. And from this they have worked out some principles for arranging kitchen equipment.

In the first place, they advise arranging kitching furnishings into "work centers". That is, group them so that all pieces of the equipment needed in doing one kind of work are together. In any kitchen, there will be four of these main centers. There will be a center for preparing food to cook. There will be

another for serving food. And finally, there'll be a dishwashing and clearing away center.

In each of these work centers the main pieces of equipment needed will be fairly close together. And as much as possible, storage space will be distributed among them rather than centered in one all-purpose kitchen cabinet.

Now, briefly here are the furnishings ordinarily included in the four main work centers.

First, food preparation. Of course, this centers around the sink. And the sink is usually near a window -- if possible so that the light from the window comes over the shoulder of the person at the sink. Near the sink will be storage space for knives, utensils, and maybe a small ventilated space for small quantities of raw vegetables.

A worktable is also part of the food-preparation center. This is for preparing food that requires long mixing -- or beating up -- or rolling out. And in this table will be storage space for mixing bowls, flour, and other staple foods used in cooking.

The second work center is for cooking. And this is the stove. The best place for the stove is somewhere near the sink -- either at right angles to it or across the room from it in a narrow kitchen. A small work surface near the stove is a help when it comes to preparing beverages -- or mixing up thickenings -- or doing any of the small jobs that come up in connection with cooking. And here again, storage space near the stove provides room for pans and utensils used at the stove.

And logically following the cooking center comes the serving center. This is a sort of collection place between the stove and the dining table. There you put the final touches on the food before it goes to the table. Just how big this center is varies a lot. Sometimes it's a drop shelf -- sometimes a plain table. Or it may be a table on wheels or a pass cupboard between dining room and kitchen.

Finally, in this line-up of work centers comes the one for dishwashing. This also centers around the sink. For dishwashing purposes the sink should be near the serving center. It should have a flat surface to the right -- a drainboard to the left -- because the natural order of dishwashing is from right to left. If dishes are kept in the kitchen -- a cupboard above or near the left drainboard is most convenient.

That briefly sums up the way you may arrange a kitchen according to work centers. And if you arrange it this eay ycu'll save yourself a lot of steps. The basic principle of course is -- "arrange equipment with an eye to its uses".

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